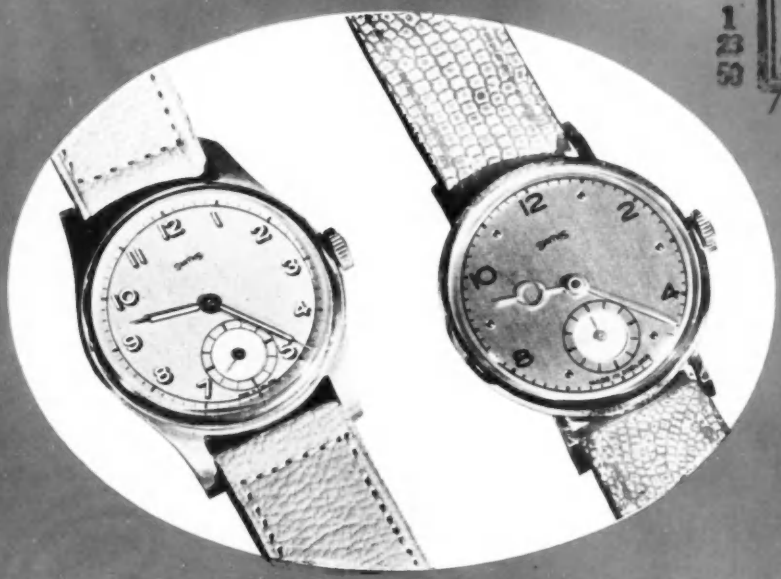
DESIGN

A monthly journal for manufacturers and designers



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COUNCIL OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

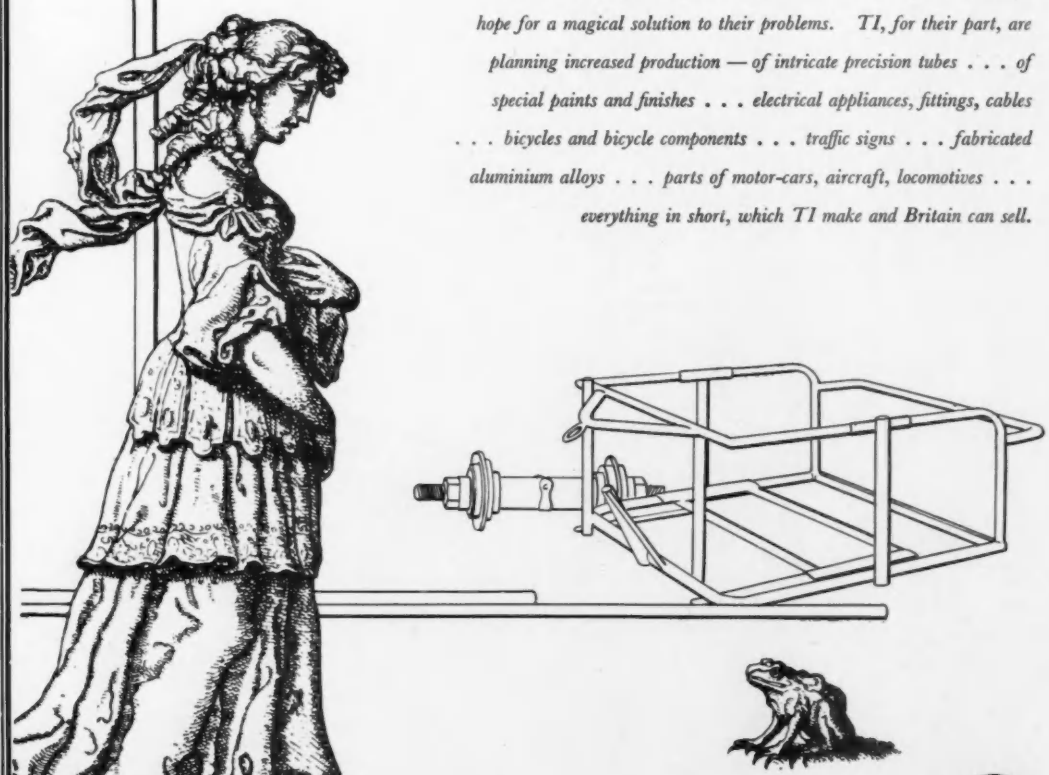
NUMBER 12 : DECEMBER 1949

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS

The fable of the lady and the frog

A certain Romantic Maiden, who was reckoned extremely beautiful in a rather old-fashioned way, once found a Frog in her path, and dropped it a curtsey. "What's that in aid of?" asked the Frog. "Aren't you a prince in disguise?" she enquired, nettled. "No, Ma'am," said he, "I'm a Frog — in a hurry." And he hopped away, muttering under his breath.

Even in this age of hard work and few illusions, there are people who hope for a magical solution to their problems. TI, for their part, are planning increased production — of intricate precision tubes . . . of special paints and finishes . . . electrical appliances, fittings, cables . . . bicycles and bicycle components . . . traffic signs . . . fabricated aluminium alloys . . . parts of motor-cars, aircraft, locomotives . . . everything in short, which TI make and Britain can sell.



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DESIGN

A monthly journal for manufacturers and designers

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NUMBER 12 : DECEMBER 1949

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EDITOR: Alec Davis EDITORIAL OFFICES: Tilbury House, Petty France, London SW1 Whitehall 6322

THE 1951 EXHIBITION

IT IS NOW clear that the exhibition to be held in 1951 on the South Bank of the River Thames will not be a trade fair; industries and businesses will not be able to buy exhibition space. It is also clear, from last month's announcements by the Festival of Britain Office, that the exhibition will have to be exceedingly selective both in the subjects chosen for display and in the detailed exhibits. The South Bank site is only 27 acres and the covered exhibition area is not likely to be much greater than Olympia. This means that the story of British achievement in Science, Technology and Industrial Design—which is to be the main theme of the exhibition—will have to be edited with fine discrimination, for however pressing the claims of the many branches of our science and industry, only those in which this country is outstanding will find a place; many activities and industries in which British achievement is great but not notably in advance of other countries will not be represented.

Because the exhibition is to tell a continuous story from pavilion to pavilion, the exhibits will be shown, as far as possible, in the settings in which they are usually applied or in such contexts as point the argument of British achievement. Goods will not be grouped industry by industry as in the first post-war selective exhibition "Britain Can Make It"; appropriate clothing, for instance, will be shown in many sections of the exhibition, though no single pavilion will be devoted to the fashion industries; pottery will not be massed on display shelves as in a potter's showroom, but will be seen and admired throughout the exhibition wherever it will fit a context—in the Homes and Gardens section, for example, or in the restaurants; in the Character and Tradition section for fine china, or the Health section for hospital ware.

The individual manufacturer or his trade association may argue from this that his industry's products will be deprived of their maximum impact if they are not grouped into one display. And the expert from any one industry may expect to find a complete representation of his industry rather than an introduction to its further study. Such limitations are inevitable, but they are by no means cause for doubting the ultimate benefit this national selective exhibition will bring to British industry as a whole.

The merits of selective exhibitions are today widely recognised by industry, for they are akin to those of prestige advertising. Every manufacturer knows the importance of quality and workmanship and, though some may not practise these virtues, all respect those leaders, in any trade, who consistently set the standard and maintain the pace. Such pioneers deserve encouragement. It is because the Festival Exhibition is concerned only with those activities and products which bring this country most credit that it will, in the words of the official announcement, "promote Britain's Business on a national scale and powerfully reinforce our export drive." P. R.

MRS CARNAC
Mezzotint by John Raphael Smith after Sir Joshua Reynolds
Published in 1778

French fashion
AND
ENGLISH COSTUME

JAMES LAVER

THE DOMINANCE OF French fashions during the last 150 years is taken so much for granted that we are apt to suppose that it has been going on for much longer and has been modified hardly at all by influences from outside. It actually began in the early eighteenth century or the end of the seventeenth, but up to the period of the French Revolution it never completely drove out the local modes. English fashion in particular maintained a certain degree of independence largely due to the fact that the life of the English upper classes was lived much more in the country than was the life of the French *noblesse*.

With the invention of the fashion plate, towards the end of the eighteenth century, French influence greatly increased so far as women's fashions were concerned. With men it was just the opposite, the French and all other European nations deriving their costume, with small modifications, from that of the English country gentleman.

Yet even in the nineteenth century, and still more in the twentieth, with the growing popularity of the *tailleur*, England had much to contribute even to women's dress, and once more the differences were largely due to the rural element in English life as opposed to the urban background of the upper-class French. This is the main modifying influence throughout, and with it goes a tendency to avoid the extravagance of French modes, to tone them down and simplify them while maintaining the fashionable line. It is the "sensible" attitude to clothes which remains the main influence behind English fashions, and the French themselves have been influenced by clothes designed on this side of the Channel. In fact, English taste, especially during the last 60 years, has played an important part in the history of every department of dress, except the *robe de style*. We shall see in the following examples how this has worked out and what we must look for when we compare French and English modes.

1777—

It may be thought unfair to contrast Court dress—that is, urban costume pushed to the extreme—with (*left*) what is so plainly a dress for the country house and the park attached thereto. But this difference is the essential line of cleavage between French and English fashions. Of course, even the English clothes are not "country clothes" in the sense of clothes permitting any kind of active rural pursuit. The headdress alone would make anything more than a quiet stroll impossible. But the contrast is most marked, all the same.

1778

LA DAME DU PALAIS DE LA REINE
Line engraving by P. A. Martini after Moreau le Jeune
Published in 1777

FRENCH FASHION PLATE
1800

ENGLISH FASHION PLATE
1799

1799—1800

After the French Revolution and the extravagances of the *Directoire*, the French themselves adopted a much simpler form of garment, based ultimately on English country modes, modified by the prevalent enthusiasm for Antiquity. In France the so-called Greek fashions were pushed to an extreme never reached in England. The corset was entirely abandoned; the waist was pushed up under the armpits and there was a considerable degree of décolletage. The English modification was in the direction of a greater degree of propriety, together with a touch of romanticism in the pseudo-Elizabethan ruffles shown in the English fashion plate.

COSTUMES ANGLAIS & FRANCAIS
Anonymous etching published in 1814

1814

England was cut off from France from the Peace of Amiens in 1802 till the abdication of Napoleon in 1814. In the latter year English ladies swarmed over to Paris and found, to their astonishment, that English and French fashions had noticeably diverged in the previous 12 years. The English waist was now in its normal place, and a stiff corset formed a ridge over the bosom. The French waist had remained high, but the skirt was wider and the romantic ruff was now most marked. The result of this *rencontre* in the streets of Paris was a complete victory for the French fashions. These particular English modes are never seen again.

1880

From 1814 to about 1880 the dominance of French fashions continues only slightly modified by the greater quietness of the English modes. In the eighties, however, a new modification was introduced by the Æsthetic Movement. "Æsthetic" clothes tended to be loose and flowing with a supposed resemblance to the "Pre-Raphaelite" dresses of the early Florentines. *Punch*, endeavouring to be impartial, shows us two contrasting pairs. In one the "fashionable" (that is, French) clothes are shown to be more attractive; in the other the "Æsthetic" (that is, English) clothes bear away the palm—or should one say, the lily? But it is plain that we are dealing with different styles.

WOOD-ENGRAVING AFTER GEORGE DU MAURIER
Punch, 1881

1907-8

The dresses of the London shoppers are in marked contrast with those of the Parisian race-goers. The London tailor-mades show hardly any modification of the styles current since the beginning of the century. The French costumes, with their extreme tightness round the hips, the foot-hampering draperies and the enormous hats, look forward to the style of 1910. We are well on our way to the hobble-skirt. Both styles show the characteristic tight waist with the S-shaped figure typical of the period.

Parisian race-goers,
Photograph reproduced in the
Illustrated London News, May 1908

Fashion plate of London tailor-made
fashions, May 1907

1913

An interesting contrast in the clothes of actresses: Mlle. Marthe Lenclud and our own Irene Vanbrugh. Both dresses are supposed to be "walking costumes," but, while the one is a practical outfit for a walk through the woods, the other is obviously only in place in Paris. It is the English costume which is here the pioneer: indeed it would only be necessary to shorten the skirt a little to make Miss Vanbrugh's costume equally in fashion at almost any date for the 10 years following.

The stabilising influence of practicality is thus seen as an influence "ironing out" the vagaries of Fashion, and this is a persistent element in English modes throughout the period under review.

Although these illustratious stop at 1913, *the Englishman who requires evidence of continuing French influence today need only look around him. French and English fashions diverged noticeably during World War* II, *as they had done between* 1802 *and* 1812 *; but with the re-establishment of contact, French* line *resumed its sway, modified in England by the influences discussed above.* EDITOR

FABRIC DESIGN AND FASHION : 1

Women's wear: by Audrey Withers *

THE DESIGN OF everything which is made is bound up with the qualities of the material which makes it. One of the exhibits in the Council's Design Fair showed the different shapes of a hot water bottle in rubber or in metal, and of a pepper-pot in wood or in plastics. In exactly the same way, the design of clothes is bound up with the character of the fabric which makes them. This character is made up of a number of elements: handle, weight, texture, colour, pattern. "Handle" describes the feel of a fabric in the hand: its softness, firmness or stiffness, its ability to drape or hang or stand out. The whole difference between gracefulness and clumsiness, or between crispness and floppiness, may lie in a difference in handle.

Closely allied to handle is weight. To take extreme cases: imagine a narrow tailored skirt in chiffon, or an all-round pleated skirt in heavy coating. One would be a wretched wisp, unable to keep its shape; the other would be too bulky to carry around. Between these extremes lies a whole range of fabrics, shading from the totally unsuitable to ones which are perfect for the purpose.

Short loose jacket

FABRICS: top, Harris tweed; bottom, heavy overcoating. Both from International Wool Secretariat

These qualities—handle and weight—are what one might call the technical qualities, which influence the shape of a garment. The other qualities—texture, colour, pattern—one might call the surface qualities, and these give a garment much of its fashion and design value.

Of course, the technical qualities should be the first consideration, because "line" is the most important single element in dress, and the line can only be right if the fabric is right. The same design can be rendered unrecognisable by making it up in two fabrics of utterly different technical qualities, but a design can be made successfully in a wide variety of fabrics, provided that their technical qualities are similar. For instance, a suit may be tailored equally well in heavy linen, velveteen, or a firm suiting; a soft draped dress could be made in rayon crepe or in fine wool jersey. The designer could choose shantung or poplin or nylon for a crisp blouse.

An interesting development this season points a way of using the same fabric to get totally different effects of line in one garment. There is a trend at the moment for soft moulded body-lines interrupted by sharp-angled shapes : a moulded sheath-dress, for instance, with a stiff peplum, stiff pointed collar and cuffs, stiff wrapped skirt. Now a fabric that will mould the bodyline will not jut into these sharp-angled shapes *unless* it is stiffened by a lining: and this is exactly what some designers are doing. The dress is made in fine woollen or rayon; then the sharp-angled details are lined in faille, taffeta or velvet, so that they jut out in the way that was intended. It is clear, then, that soft fabrics can be judiciously stiffened at strategic points; whereas stiff fabrics remain uncompromisingly stiff.

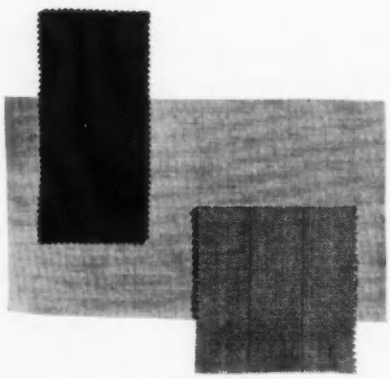
To return to those surface qualities—texture, pattern and colour. *Texture* is a matter of having a smooth or broken surface; of being shiny or matt, close or open in weave, and so on. Fashion at the

continued on p. 10

* Editor of *Vogue* and a member of the Council of Industrial Design

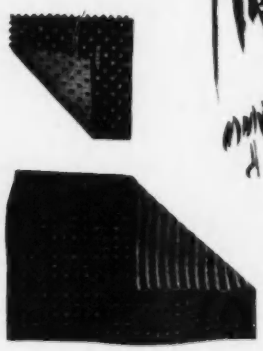
Tailored suit with double peplum buttoned at the back; slim skirt

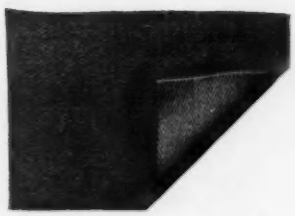
FABRICS (below, left to right): barathea from International Wool Secretariat; tropical worsted suiting by S. H. Rawnsley Ltd; striped worsted from IWS

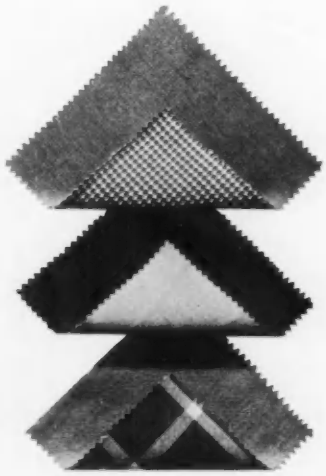


Dress with collar continuing into one-sided scarf that drops to the hem and shows a plaid lining

FABRICS: top left, reversible rayon and wool, from Rayon Design Centre; bottom left, Godau Guillaume reversible jersey; below, Rawnsley novelty dress-woollen; right, three Jacqmar reversible coatings







moment is swinging towards nubbly or fleecy textures in woollens of the heavy coating type, and textures of this kind have a feeling of depth which suits the extremely heavy woollens needed to bulk out today's vast pyramid coats. In lighter-weight woollens, Donegal tweeds—with their flecks and nubs of colour on dry-textured, neutral grounds—are a departure from the smoothness which has prevailed until recently. Afternoon and evening dresses still employ the whole range of stiff silk or rayon fabrics such as faille, moiré, satin, taffeta, grosgrain, brocade—often with cut-velvet raised patterns. All these fabrics have a gleam in them, in contrast to the dead-matt silk jerseys which are sometimes in the front of the fashion picture.

Pattern is something that needs to be used with a very sure touch. A large pattern, for instance, may completely obscure the lines of a dress with a complicated cut, but if used for a dress with very simple lines, it may look magnificent. One pattern needs a spreading evening skirt to give it full scope; another is ideal for a blouse, but would be watered down into insignificance if used on a large area. In recent seasons, tones of the same colour have been most liked; or patterns using one colour with black and white. Large patterns have been of the brush-stroke or pen-stroke variety, or of a delicate lacy quality. Small patterns have been based on the tie-silk type of motif.

Lastly *colour*—always a changing fashion element. This winter sees a range of "charcoal" colours—colours which seem to have black mixed into them; the spring counterpart may well be colours which seem to have white mixed into them. There is a noticeable return of blue after a long absence; for example, petrol and thunder blue, and royal blue, especially with black. The neutral ranges of grey, beige and brown persist.

The sketches accompanying this article are reproduced by courtesy of *Vogue*

Short evening dress with full skirt, belted waist, one-sided bodice point

FABRICS: rayons from the Rayon Design Centre; top to bottom, duchesse satin, grosgrain, reversible satin, satin

Evening dress of ball dress type; very full skirt with contrasting "scissor" panels

FABRICS: at left, Jacquard-woven rayon by West Cumberland Silk Mills Ltd (designer, Miki Sekers). Below, woven rayon check taffeta from Rayon Design Centre; "Gay Nineties" rayon (satin striped grosgrain) by British Celanese Ltd

FABRIC DESIGN AND FASHION : 2

Men's clothing: by H. A. Prince, Editor, MAN—*and his clothes*

TO UNDERSTAND the relationship between fabric design and style in men's clothes, it is necessary to know something about the history of the garments we all wear today. Early records of the Englishman's clothes show that in the fourteenth century only a loose outer garment was worn, usually an unshapely piece of cloth reaching in generous folds from the shoulders to the ground. Later, a short mantle was introduced, only just long enough to reach to the thighs, leaving the legs almost entirely free. It was the introduction of this coat-like garment that started a long series of experiments in the design of garments for both the upper and the lower parts of the body. These experiments went on until about the latter half of the eighteenth century, when a more or less reasonable costume, according to our standards, had been devised. That costume forms the basis of our modern dress.

There is little doubt that, previously, texture and colour of the materials used were the principal influences affecting the appearance of men's clothes, because tailors did not have to cut their garments in the way they do now. But from about 1750 onwards, when the new style was introduced—together with better tailoring—the influence of the design and colour of the cloth on the finished garment has gradually decreased until we have what we are wearing today. Today it is the tailor, or the stylist, who inspires our clothes, rather than the cloth maker—who manu-

continued overleaf

The influence of fabric design on the appearance of the garment is most evident in sports clothes. Two coats of similar cut look very different in light fawn Shetland tweed (left) and in Harris tweed with brown and white houndstooth check

factures his fabrics according to demand. Popular designs and colourings for suits and coats are so subdued that they are nothing more than a background; it is the tailor who makes the subtle suggestion of increased height or breadth, the flowing line to give an impression of slimness or the discreet padding to conceal some part of a figure which may be below average. Workmanship has, therefore, to be of the highest quality in order for the discriminating male to appear different from his fellows.

As far as lounge suits or evening wear are concerned, to the undiscerning eye all sections of the community dress more or less alike and it is therefore necessary for the tailor to use his art to the best of his advantage. The inability to produce a well-made and properly fitting garment cannot be hidden by flamboyant materials, decorations or ornaments, as it could in the past.

In modern dress the relationship between fabric design and style is closest in sporting garments, where men are able to express their individuality to an extent not found in formal or semi-formal clothes. For sports clothes, a wider variety of fabrics—wider in texture, pattern and colour—is available to the man who wishes to be original.

Styles which commence as casual wear are, moreover, frequently introduced into more formal garments. The "cut-away" coat and hard top-hat originally worn for hunting are now the accepted garments for the most formal kind of day wear. Another, more recent, example of this tendency is the coat made with side-vents or a centre vent, once frowned upon for anything but sports clothes, now frequently seen in lounge coats.

Colours and designs to harmonise with the fields and countryside are made for sports clothes; for the keen sportsman, some Scottish manufacturers even produce a "pheasant" cloth woven in a mixture of heather, green and fawn to blend with the landscape.

Touches of originality in design and colour are frequently to be found in sporting accessories. The odd waistcoat, contrasting or harmonising with its wearer's jacket, is a current example which encourages a closer relationship between fabric design and the style of cut. The waistcoat, indeed, has generally been looked upon as a garment which could be decorated in some form or other and worn as a cheerful or distinctive contrast to the rest of the costume: during the Restoration, gold lace was not at all an uncommon trimming on the gentleman's waistcoat.

Feminine influence on men's fashions cannot altogether be disregarded, although in recent years this influence has had little or no effect on the drifting relationship between design and fashion.

After the war there was a big change in women's fashions. The New Look was developed chiefly because women wanted increased femininity; with it came a bolder style in men's garments. Coats were made longer, shoulders were given an appearance of added width, trousers were cut an inch or two narrower—the whole effect being a subtle increase in masculinity and sex appeal.

Colour and pattern in cloth for male attire were previously used for a twofold purpose, *i.e.* class distinction and to attract the opposite sex; today *style*, in the design of the garments, conveys the meaning.

Two examples of the fancy waistcoat which is currently enjoying a considerable vogue. As in many earlier periods, waistcoats may now be made in materials which contrast with the rest of the costume; but generally, the design of fabrics for men's wear means little today by comparison with the essential part it played during the reign of Edward II, Henry VIII and Charles I

DESIGN IN AUSTRALIA

NEWS OF DESIGN in the Southern Hemisphere is relatively scarce in Britain, and illustrations are still scarcer. The photographs above and overleaf are from a selection made by Milner Gray, RDI, FSIA, during a visit to Australia and New Zealand, which he undertook this year on behalf of the British Council.

Much of his time was occupied with lectures, broadcasts and meetings with manufacturers, designers and educationalists. He also visited a number of factories and stores. The general standard of manufactured and packaged goods, he found, was not high. In some cases the finish was of a poor quality—especially in furniture (where too little use is made of the various beautiful woods which are plentifully available locally); in shoes and leather goods, pressed metal wares and clothing. Domestic articles, especially household electrical equipment, largely follow American styles: in fact, many are made under licence from abroad. Similarly, the new Holden car is basically a General Motors' design, with minor modifications to suit local conditions. The complete car—engine, chassis and bodywork—is being made in Australia: a fact of which Australians are justifiably proud, at this stage in their country's industrial development.

No Australasian style of design in mass-produced goods has yet evolved, and in most cases it is evident that little or no thought has been given to the subject. There are few competent designers practising either in Australia or in New Zealand, and the present tendency is for those of outstanding ability to emigrate to the UK or USA, where greater opportunities are offered. However, there seems to be a real opportunity for the full and profitable employment of a small number of good designers, both in specialised fields of manufacture and in general consultancy practice. During Milner Gray's tour, manufacturers on several occasions expressed a desire for guidance.

An Australian viewpoint is expressed by a young designer in Melbourne who, in a letter to Mr Gray after his return, attempts to explain why design in Australia lags behind music, the theatre and literature. The poor tradition in visual design is, he suggests, largely explained by the fact that Australian culture was founded in the Victorian era, with only faint Georgian and Regency influence in a few of the earliest buildings in Tasmania and New South Wales.

There are at present, he writes, many good contemporary artists and quite a few capable architects and designers whose work is gradually gaining acceptance, "despite the general shoddiness of *objets d'art* displayed in city emporiums and stores and the crudity of speculative building that has flourished since the end of the war. . . . Acute shortage of many products and materials has meant that anything sells, whether good or bad. . . . The buying public, poorly equipped to discriminate between varying qualities, is not even in a position to exercise any discrimination in favour of high-quality workmanship or sound design."

In short, though design standards in Australia are not high, appreciation of the need for improvement is growing among manufacturers and designers. The lively interest shown in Milner Gray's tour, not only by questions and debate following the reading of his papers, but by informal meetings and discussions arranged subsequently, seems to confirm this,

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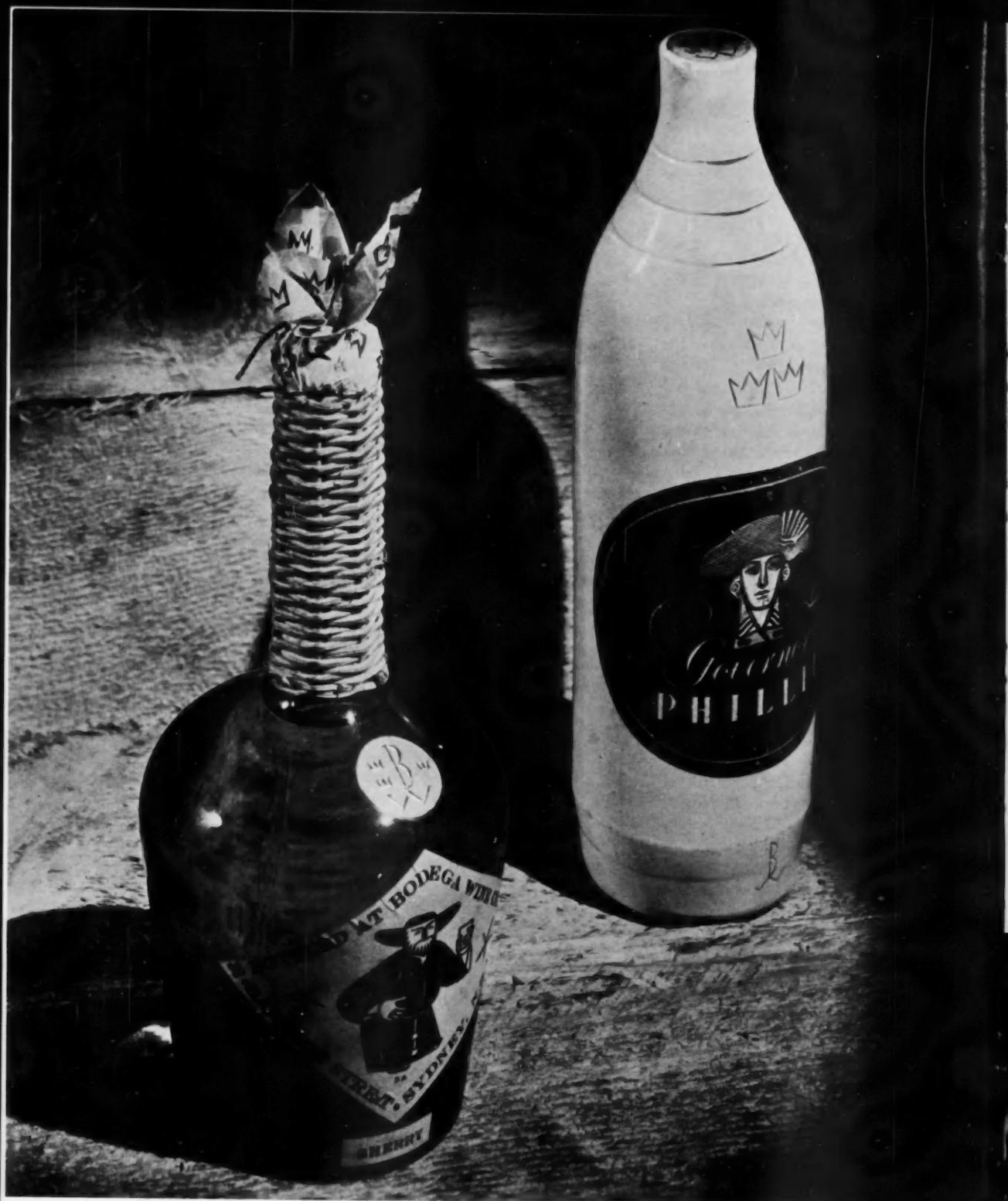


1: *Stoneware bottle and label; wicker and label for an existing bottle; both designed by Douglas Annand for Bodega Wine Co, Sydney*

5: *Oil-d*

2: *Rocking chair by Gordon Andrews. This designer has now left Australia and is practising in London*

as does the recent establishment of two associations of designers—the Australian Commercial & Industrial Artists' Association and the Society of Designers for Industry. The latter is organised on similar lines to the SIA in Great Britain, and both have now effected affiliations with the British society.

An instance of architects entering the industrial-design field is provided by Arthur Stephenson, FRIBA, who designed a casing for the *Spirit of Progress* locomotive. Stephenson & Turner, the partnership of which he is a member, were the architects of the new Royal Melbourne Hospital: the nurses' block and administrative wing are shown on p. 13.

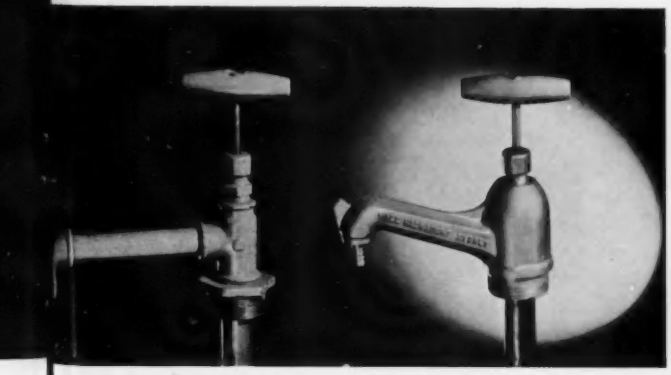
Gordon Andrews' designs include posters, book and catalogue covers, and metalware, as well as radio sets and furniture: **2, 3** and **4** on this page are examples of his work. English influence is evident

3: *Radio cabinet: model designed and made for HMV, Australia*

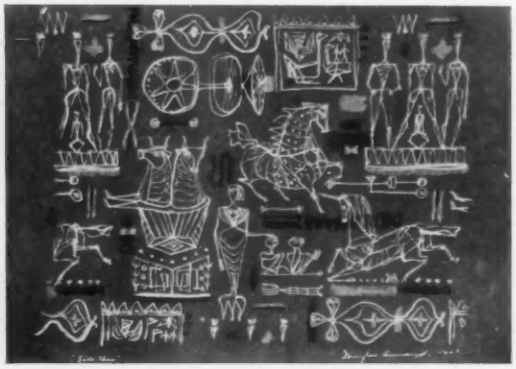
4: *Radiogram in coachwood and walnut, designed by Gordon Andrews for David Jones Ltd, Sydney*

in the radiogram **4**, which has much in common with Clive Latimer's cabinet designs for Heal's, widely publicised at the time of "Britain Can Make It."

The Wall Macnaught pump, below, has been designed by the Industrial Styling Company – Australasia for use with 44-gallon drums. Two models are produced, one for fuels and one for lubricating oils, the latter having a non-drip nozzle. The pump-head is of aluminium alloy.



5: *Oil-drum pumps designed by Industrial Styling Co, Sydney*



6: *"Side Show": design for printed textile (four colours) by Douglas Annand*

PROTOTYPE AND PRODUCTION

The manufacturer who spends time and trouble on developing his own products—instead of building other people's designs under licence—can always keep one step ahead of his competitors

by George Fejér, MSIA, *consultant designer*

ANYONE WHO HAS ever taken part in the design of an industrial product will remember the feelings of excitement and high hopes that alternate with moments of despair, frustration and the threat of failure. Sometimes everything seems to work out right; but there are times when the project drags on for years without apparent progress, using up money, and nerves to the point of breakdown.

Nothing is easier than to allow an unco-ordinated team job to drift from one meeting to another, with more blueprints, more prototypes and more trials-and-errors draining away the resources of the firm, until its directors become convinced that the development of an original design does not pay.

"Is it not better," they may then ask, "to take up the manufacture of a product of proved performance and saleability?" Sound business hates unnecessary risks. Licences can be secured for the manufacture of fully developed products; second-hand designs from overseas can be adopted, thus avoiding the trouble and delay of pioneering in design.

On the face of it this sounds reasonable, but there are other sides to the question. Because of the longish process of design, detailing and tooling up, it is fairly certain that any product that has been selling well for, say, six months is now two or three years (or more) past the idea stage; it is often said that a textbook can be out of date at the time of publication. The manufacturer who depends on other people's pioneer work must be content to be always a pace behind.

By copying or adopting ready-made designs, he will also deprive his own technicians of scope for enthusiastic work—and the finest asset any manufacturing organisation can build up is the ability and skill of its own team, capable of producing good work in good time.

This becomes a vital point when the manufacturer comes to export business. He is expected to be more ingenious, more fluid in outlook than ever before; yet every export product must carry the hallmark of British sincerity and skill. A product made to a design which we imported from some other country is likely to cut a poor figure in export markets, especially where it has to sell in competition with the original.

Many industrialists believe that tinkering with prototypes is the only possible form of development: no drawings or blueprints for them. Others will keep all development work choking up the drawing office until hard-and-fast drawings exist for every component.

Both methods are likely to go wrong. The first is suitable for the sculptor or the studio potter, who creates in his medium as he goes along, and can consider alternatives in detailing at the very moment of the productive process: the work put into his prototype is never wasted, because it is the real thing and not a dummy. But this approach is unsatisfactory for low-cost, repetition products. Here we must have prototypes that show what the final product will be like, if and when all tools are made and assembly is completed.

The other approach—no prototype—is workable within very clear limits. We do not build a prototype for a new town hall, bridge, or ship, if the product is to be "one off." Here the designer must play safe, and specify materials and methods that are fully understood. There is little room for experiment and no room for techniques that require tooling up.

There is a middle course between these two extremes. The right proportion between drawings and prototypes is different on every project and can be determined at the outset of the development work.

Where people work together, they cannot give their best until they know what they are aiming at. In modern industry, the task of the individual

becomes more and more obscure unless the common aim is made clear to him, as well as the part he is expected to play. So the first purpose of a prototype is *demonstration*, to obtain agreement and co-operation.

Secondly, prototypes can be built to test the assumption on which the design was visualised, especially if there are experiments involved. (Prototypes may even be shown to users and distributors, so that they too can contribute to development work before it has gone too far.) Up to the prototype stage, development work should proceed with breathtaking speed. Scrutiny and testing can take their course afterwards.

We know that an infinite number of detail solutions exists to each design problem, and if we are to "explore all avenues" economically, there must be at least one person in the design team who is capable of visualising an adequate number of alternative solutions in full detail. He must be left to struggle alone, and later to report back to the team with his suggested solutions: his reports and sketches will show how and why they have been arrived at. With them, we are already half-way from idea to reality.

The "visualiser" (for want of a better word) must obviously be someone whose views carry weight with the other members of the design team. His position will vary as the scope of the work and the composition of the team vary from case to case. In the four examples which follow, we see staff engineer-designers and staff artist-designers at work, as well as the consultant designer and the inventor.

1. Modernising a machine tool

The Etsco shaping machine is a versatile tool for high-speed precision work, designed and developed by C. H. Joyce Ltd.

The machines produced up to 1945 were not particularly original, and were reminiscent of a competitive model. Intensive development work was carried out in 1945, resulting in Etsco No. 2. The present model, No. 2A, not only incorporates the improvements in performance and handling which were dictated by experience, but in it a measure of integration has become possible. The base is now more logical in shape, and incidentally it is a better casting, easier to keep clean. Such integration is only possible when a firm has a clear-cut policy and knows what is aimed at, instead of trying to produce an all-purpose machine with a number of things added as afterthoughts.

The design and manufacture of this machine were so interrelated that the firm is unwilling to single out anyone as having had the lion's share in the development work. This is natural where suggestions made over a period are incorporated; but it must be pointed out that the Etsco shaper is one of the few examples in which slow evolution has produced a simplified design that is good to look at.

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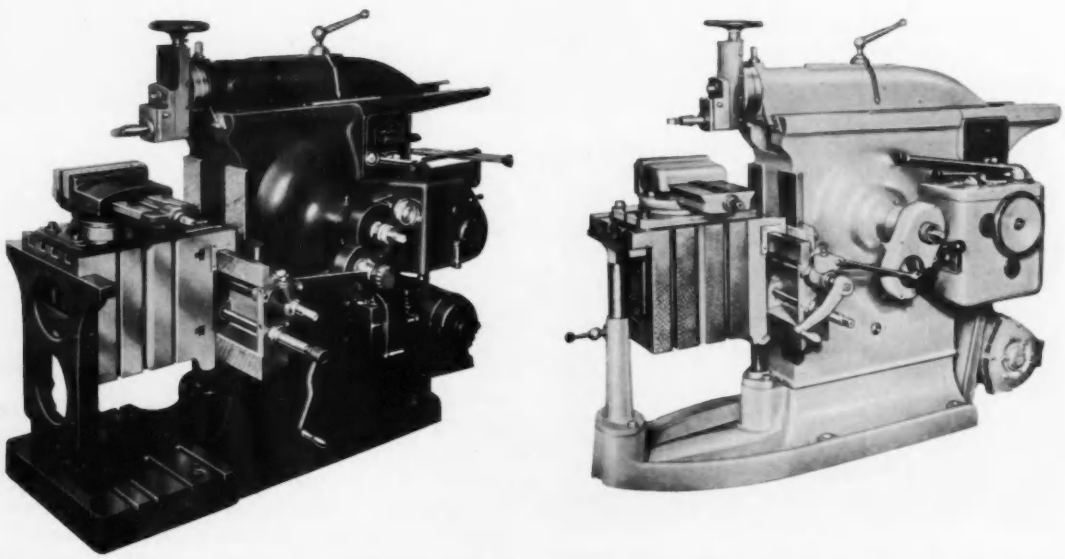


Etsco shaping machine; left, 1945 model; right, latest model, an example of slow evolution rather than drastic change

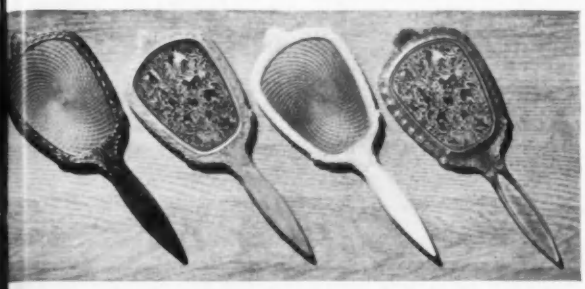
Halex brush sets in clear polystyrene. Top of page: project only—but it may be put into production at a later date. Above: an inexpensive set now in production for export

PROTOTYPE AND PRODUCTION

continued

2. Designing a dressing-table set

To develop an inexpensive brush set by the rapid technique of injection moulding is a possibility that has tempted many plastic moulders, but it has taken the manufacturing experience of a large organisation experienced in brush-making to turn out a soundly made product. Halex Ltd were not afraid to put down special plant for the sealing and clean fastening of inserts in order to handle the assembly stages as a logical sequence after moulding.



"The facility with which different materials can be used is interesting—and dangerous." Mirrors made up in metal-coated polystyrene; mottled cellulose acetate; ivory-white cellulose acetate; clear polystyrene

With this type of consumer goods, turned out on expensive tools and plant, the quantities must be large. Both plain and decorated models were developed; the choice of a decorated design was decided mainly by sales experience.

Most previous brush sets were fabricated from sheet, which necessarily imposes design limitations. There comes a point where fabricated products must give way to moulded ones for economic reasons, and for very large quantities moulding is obviously the thing. The brush set illustrated was conceived primarily to be moulded in transparent polystyrene, but this material is used only on the export production while present regulations prevail. The facility with which different materials can be used with the same design is very interesting and also very dangerous. The article becomes something wholly different when we use different thermoplastics; the feel and quality change entirely. For example, it is only too easy to change crystal-like clarity, by a process of metal coating, into a form that has all the pomp of cast bronze. Luckily the design team ruled this out.

The team consisted of representative sections of the Halex organisation. The staff designer, E. J. Doudney, FRBS, FRSA, MSIA, and his department were chiefly responsible for visualising the product. They made the sketches, carved the prototypes and prepared working drawings, thereby helping the work to progress simultaneously in the technical and commercial departments. They were available for consultations on all decisions that affected design.

3. Redesigning an electronic instrument

The mobile oscilloscope made by Nagard Ltd is finding increasing use in industry as the outcome of electronic design work and basic research by one of the directors, P. Nagy, AMIEE.

As half of the production is destined for export, compactness is desirable. The readings take place on the screen of the cathode ray tube, and this must be well screened against light. As the instrument may have to be squeezed into a small space with other all-round equipment, its top and sides must be flush and without projections.

Redesign became necessary because of new electronic developments and improved performances; the machine outgrew its case. The power unit is now separate. The directors and the consultant designer have completely reorganised the technique of assembly and made a number of changes to render the handling and understanding of the new instrument easier. The sub-assemblies are clearly grouped and this grouping is reflected in the appearance of the

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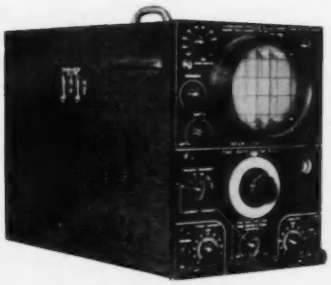
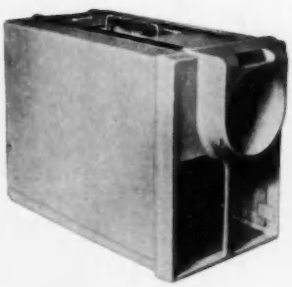


Nagard mobile oscilloscope before redesign



Light-alloy castings for the new model

Redesigned instrument, with power unit in separate housing underneath

machine. To help servicing, all fixing screws have been eliminated from the surface, leaving only those visible that are necessary for access. All relevant information the user needs is "built-in," and spaces for spares, cables, probe, etc, have been allowed for in the design.

The directors had a clear idea of what the new oscilloscope casing should do, though they were not set in their minds as to what it should look like. They called in the present writer, early in their deliberations, as consultant designer. The sketch stage was reached in a matter of days, and the first castings and pressings for prototype assembly for testing were ready within a month from the date of briefing.

4. Developing a convertible car body

The problem of having a fully closed car that can also be fully opened is as old as motoring itself. This all-metal convertible car roof has been developed by Dolphin Industrial Developments Ltd; at present it is fitted on an Allard chassis, and has to conform to the general line (and bonnet, in particular) of that car. It is claimed that the joints are water-tight owing to the special care taken in detail work and the introduction of rubber gaskets at the two main joints, coupled with an adequate system for draining the water from the joints very rapidly. It takes less than a minute to convert the sports saloon, by hand, into a completely open car. The project is also being developed for power operation, and it has been designed to suit several makes of car besides the Allard.

The design lends itself to serial production, as it employs the same technique of pressing as the rest of the bodywork. Several prototypes had to be made as the design was tackled simultaneously from the angle of production, appearance and easy handling, and the final design emerged as the result of all this experimental design and development work.

Colonel John Dolphin is an inventor-designer known for his work on the one-man submarine and the paratroop motorcycle and its successor, the Corgi. He now heads a development team including draughtsmen, engineers, pattern-makers and other technicians at his experimental establishment at Twyford Manor. Although he has definite ideas as to what looks right in a technical product, he has on some occasions reinforced his own judgment by taking the advice of professional industrial design consultants.

Inventor-designer: Col Dolphin's open-closed car

PAINT IN PRODUCT DESIGN

Users' views on finishes and colours analysed in Mass Observation survey

MUCH IS SAID about market research into design problems, but very little is *done* about it. To the limited volume of information obtained by such research a recent Mass Observation survey makes some valuable additions, even though it is concerned only with one aspect of design—finish. The survey was undertaken for the Paints Division of ICI, but the results have been made generally available.*

Representative town and country housewives were asked about domestic products ranging from vacuum cleaners to pianos. Paint finish of radios, gramophones and refrigerators was criticised least, and of bicycles, prams and lawnmowers most. Chief complaints were of chipping and scratching, but most women attributed this to fair wear and tear—there was very little dissatisfaction with workmanship.

Four people out of every five said they had no trouble at all with their furniture; most of the complaints that were made concerned Utility pieces. Out of every 100 people, 31 preferred oak, 10 walnut, 10 mahogany, 4 other natural woods, "though over a third of the sample gave answers so widely varying that they could only be categorised as 'miscellaneous.'" Most people were mainly concerned that a good polish to the finish should be obtainable. There seems to be a greater divergence of opinion about the finish of metal furniture than about other articles mentioned in the survey. This, it is suggested, is due to the great variation in the quality obtainable. Complaints about rusting were, however, fairly common. Cream and green were the most popular colours for both painted wooden and enamelled furniture.

For radio sets, pastel colours were only occasionally mentioned: natural wood finishes (oak and walnut) were the favourites. Sometimes a wood was chosen to fit in with a room's general furnishing scheme.

There were no marked preferences among colours for vacuum cleaners and carpet sweepers, a quarter of those asked having no idea what colour they would choose—perhaps for the reason given by one Stafford housewife, that "it's the make which matters, not the colour." Among the colours that were selected, however, black and brown were the most popular.

Of all the questions asked, those about prams aroused the most interesting and detailed comment and there was less tendency for the housewife to accept responsibility for faults appearing in the finish. Only 5 per cent of the whole sample failed to express a colour preference; nearly two-thirds chose either blue or cream.

Pianos, unlike most other articles discussed in the booklet, had been owned by the vast majority of housewives since well before the war. They evoked very little detailed comment, there being no distinct colour or wood favourite. The impression was, in fact, gained "that their use was largely ornamental."

With lawnmowers—as with some other articles—most complaints about the wearing qualities of paint finishes referred to models recently purchased. Colour choice for mowers was unanimously green.

Black was by far the most popular choice for bicycles, with blue and green a long way behind. Although complaints about paint finishes on bicycles were more numerous than about any other product, not all were as bad as that voiced by a housewife who said that her bicycle had "gone" very badly in the last 12 months, as the chromium had worn off the rims, the mudguards were scratched and the rust was eating through.

Almost half the people owning cars had bought them second-hand. Black was again the most popular colour choice, followed by blue, grey, maroon and green. A minority were interested in the brighter colours, although such highly individual preferences as that of an Oxford charwoman who wanted black with a design of flowers on it were rare. (This same woman chose a yellow pram with a black hood, scarlet and black painted wooden furniture, a cream piano with flowers painted on it and a yellow lawnmower!)

Of those housewives possessing washing machines 35 per cent made complaints about the finish. Cream, white and green were overwhelmingly popular colours.

continued on p. 30

* Booklet, *People and Paint*, available free from Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd, Paints Division, Slough, Bucks

FROM THE 1951 STOCK LIST

Dress accessories and dress fabrics, with commentary by P. Morton Shand.
This month's examples emphasise the interest of the Council of Industrial Design in the clothing and fashion industries

1 Though the half-tone illustration below rather belies the claim, the outstanding merit of this design is that it does not attempt to make a plastic-coated textile look like any sort of imitation hide. The somewhat novel but rather attractive shape proves that the designer set out to evolve a handbag that should neither echo the traditions of leather-working nor be governed by their limitations. Use of a cheaper, more uniform, and almost equally durable material enabled good finish and metal fittings to be embodied—the clasp is of a very neat type—at a retail price of about £2 including purchase tax.

2–4 The Cinderella-like emergence during the last 30 years of many lovely but only "semi-precious" stones, and the rapidly increasing demand for the sort of jewellery which is commercially not precious at all, can claim about equal credit for a dawning realisation of the aesthetic limitations of those three or four gems that undoubtedly are valuable. Though millinery jewellery is the lineal descendant of French paste, it has largely discarded deliberate imitation of precious stones and metals.

Few women nowadays can hope to acquire enough jewellery of the insurable kind to suit every dress and hat they have a mind to buy. Financially within the reach of all, because based on quite ordinary (sometimes even waste) materials, and honestly ephemeral in its appeal, with relays of models directly keyed to each successive vogue of fashion, costume jewellery fills a long-felt want both economically and psychologically. Much of it is necessarily designed to provide essential accents for passing styles of dress, and this type is naturally discarded with what it was created to emphasise.

There is also a more general, somewhat longer-lived though no more costly kind which used to be called *trinkets*. These are illustrated opposite by three groups of hat-pins, blouse-buttons, necklaces, etc. Many new and old materials, from styrene and acrylic resins to glass and ceramics, compete in the manufacture of these ornaments. Those shown at **2** and **4** are made in blown glass with a spiralled ornament in blue and black; those in **3** are of lustre and glazed earthenware. One of the two miniature stoppered scent bottles in **4** has a pin at the back to enable it to be worn as a brooch; the other is for toilet-table use.

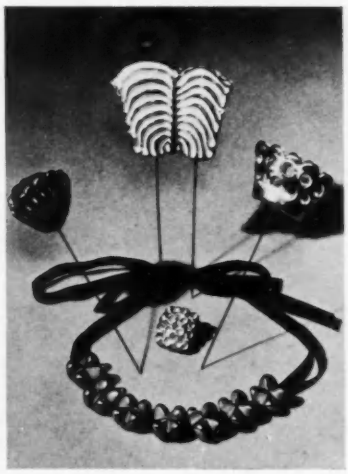
1 *Handbag designed and made by Sol Levy Ltd, London WC* 1

5–7: three recent dress fabrics representative of the increasingly catholic range of contemporary textile design, of which the last is the only one with a woven pattern.

This **7**, a semi-heraldic ogee pattern for evening wear, is perfectly adapted for bringing out the glinting, sombre richness and stiff brocaded texture of Jacquard weaving with the thriftiest decorative elements: two almost inconspicuous armorial motifs of Byzantine ancestry cabled into alternating strips.

6 is as dynamic and bacchanal as **7** is static and severe. Here again the component motifs

2 *Designed by F. Lampl (glass)*



3 *Designed & made by Lucie Rie (pottery)*

4 *Designed by F. Lampl (glass)*

Costume jewellery in glass and pottery, distributed by Orplid Glass Ltd, London, NW3

5 *"Chanticleer": a rayon designed and printed by Henry Marchington Ltd, Manchester*

6 *"Jungle Dances": a sateen designed and hand-printed by Dorothy Brooks, London, NW3*

7 *"Medallion": a Bemberg rayon designed by Miki Sekers and woven by West Cumberland Silk Mills Ltd*

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are relatively few: half-a-dozen little tattooed black-amoors bouncing about among a whirlwind of tossing palm branches coloured in as many graduated shades. This sateen is primarily intended for beach wear.

5 is an interesting type of double-headed "interchange" design, block-printed in a single colour (dark blue), intended for summer day wear. Its merits are not revealed at close quarters. Seen a little way off, this apparently rough and sprawling pattern resolves itself into a very effective rippling design that has mysteriously acquired a third tonal value.

Garment and accessory manufacturers can obtain advice on designers for their trades through the Council's Design Advice Section. There are many young designers who, given the opportunity, can help to carry on the tradition of good British clothes. General enquiries should be addressed to Mrs Valerie Veysey, the Industrial Officer concerned with the fashion industries, at Tilbury House, Petty France, London SW1 (Victoria 3933). B. W. R.

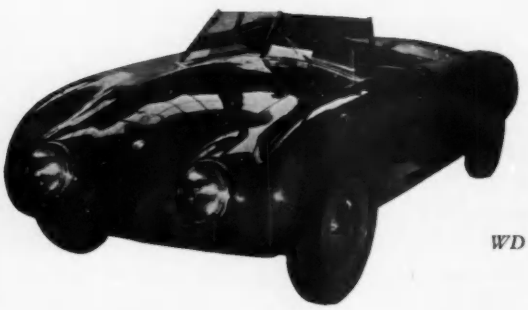
DESIGN OVERSEAS

News from the engineering industries of Central and Eastern Europe

ALONGSIDE the two photographs, below, of the familiar *Volkswagen* (the German "People's Car") are illustrated two Austrian designs which, despite their very different appearance, use a modified *Volkswagen* chassis. The open car is the WD *Sportausrustung*—hand-made, with wings and body panelling in one piece. Reduction of wind resistance has been considered in evolving its unorthodox shape, but there are practical disadvantages: there is only one door (on the passenger side); the hood, stowed behind the seats, cannot be rapidly erected; there are no bumpers to protect the lightweight shell from damage. But this is perhaps only another way of saying that it is an enthusiast's sports car.

The closed car shown below is the Porsche Type 356, designed by Dr H. C. Ferdinand Porsche, who himself designed the original *Volkswagen*. He has also designed tanks and racing cars, including the 1934–7 Auto-Union models (German) and a 12-cylinder *Grand Prix* Cisitalia for Italy. Coachwork designed and built at the Porsche works is fitted on *Volkswagen* chassis which are bought from Germany *via* Switzerland, as there is no trade between Germany and Austria. Production is only about eight cars per month and prices are very high when compared with British cars of similar performance and greater roominess. The Porsche is a two-seater with generous luggage accommodation.

Volkswagen



WD

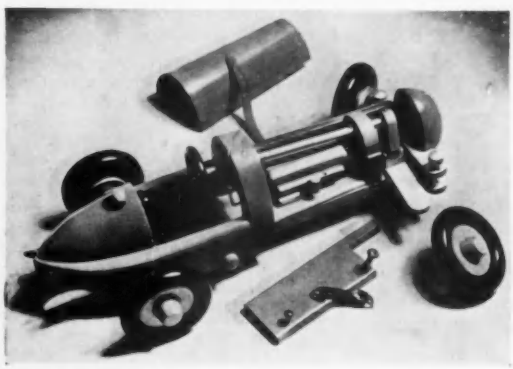
Porsche

Models for milling machines

A CZECH sculptor and engineer, Professor Zdeněk Kovar, recently discussed, in a long article in *Tvar*, the part which the industrial designer should play in the design of machines and mechanical devices. He emphasised the great benefit that engineering designer and industrial designer both derive from co-operation beginning in the early stages, which can prove mutually stimulating. Above, left, is shown a knee-type vertical milling machine, the "console" and base of which are designed by Professor Kovar; right, his new design for a horizontal milling machine. The louvres are for ventilation. From *Tvar*, April 1949.

THE FIRST BATCH of thirty cinema projectors entirely made in Yugoslavia was recently completed at the Iskra works, Kranj. They are of Yugoslav design; only in the picture-production part of the apparatus can slight resemblance to German (Zeiss-Ikon) practice be detected. The projectors have been sent to industrial and mining centres where cinemas are being opened for the workers.

MECHANICAL DESIGN again, but this time in miniature: the model car illustrated below is built up from many components, and can be taken apart. In the phrase which toymakers in every country use, the result combines entertainment and instruction. The model was designed by J. Pistorino, Czechoslovakia, and the photograph comes from *Tvar*, Czech journal of applied art and industrial design.



The charm of these cosmetic packs, made by Universal Metal Products Ltd., lies in their simple design, so well suited to the material from which they are moulded—colourful Beetle moulding powder.

Beetle and Scarab moulding powders make strong, rigid containers which, more often than not, long outlive their first contents. No hard lines and joints here, but strong, clean-flowing contours, pleasantly textured surfaces, perfect closures. Above all — colour; a wide choice of translucent, semi-translucent and opaque Beetle colours ranging from the pure primaries through to the softest pastel shades; the practical and economical Scarab grade now available in a new range of pastel shades. From a toothpaste cap to a luxury cosmetic container, there is available a suitable grade of Beetle or Scarab, white or coloured, and the B.I.P. Technical Service is always on call to help you choose the right material to ensure the best results.

Beetle and Scarab Moulding Powders conform to the Standards laid down in B.S.1322.

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Industrial Design Abstracts

Car design controversy [A]

1: In *Advertising and Selling*, Charlton Ogburn Jr maintained that the over-sized, over-decorated 1949 American cars are not designed to meet the needs of the consumer nor the actual conditions of driving, and thousands of Americans have bought small British cars because, except in cross-country driving, they offer all the advantages American car designers have abandoned. His criticisms were supported by a number of readers' letters, but opposed by Robert R. Hirsch, who stated that the appearance, performance, equipment and durability of American cars are determined by elaborate surveys, taking cognisance of consumers' views. He pointed out that many of the 1949 cars are shorter than the 1948 models and make no attempt to be streamlined.

Advertising & Selling, Philadelphia, January, March and September 1949.

2: Present trends in car design are the logical outcome of improvements in comfort and mechanical excellence. Solutions will in time emerge for combining these technical advances with better appearance. Coachwork is already becoming less ornate; on some models the shape of the wings is again defined.

Autocar, 7 October 1949.

3: Inspiration for future car design may come increasingly from aircraft shapes, which should lead to an unostentatious purity of outline. Technical developments likely to contribute to this simplified shape are the substitution of the gas-turbine, placed in the rear of the car, for the piston-type engine; increased use of aluminium alloys and possibly of plastics; complete fairing-in of headlights; changes in window and door design which will reduce the risk of accidents.

Motor, 26 October 1949.

Clocks in Sweden [A]

To stimulate clock design in Sweden, a competition is being organised by the Swedish Society of Arts and Crafts and a large clock factory.

Form, Stockholm, No. 6, 1949.

Design and the pub [S]

The Architectural Review and the Brewers' Society are organising a competition for the design of four public-house bars. Since the problem is largely the re-creation of the atmosphere of the traditional pub, without resorting to period copyism, a special issue is devoted to establishing this tradition from both social and architectural points of view.

Architectural Review, October 1949.

Design cost control [A]

The part that costing should play in arriving at decisions on design is analysed, and the organisation of a Design Cost Control Group in an engineering works is detailed. The article is mainly concerned with functional design, but the principles are generally applicable.

Product Engineering, New York, September 1949.

Design in modern jewellery [A]

Lightness and graciousness characterise new designs. Gems are prominently raised from their background and held as though by suction in an "invisible" setting; many jewelled pieces are mounted on a spring so that the jewel is constantly "moving." Convertible necklaces which can be divided into bracelet, ear-clips and dress-clips are an example of intricate design. The use of pierced and hand-sawn gold and platinum gives the delicacy and fragile appearance of lace.

Argentor, September 1949.

Early American textiles [S]

Examples of early American textiles are described. Popular decorative styles of the Colonial period included reversible weaves, patchwork quilting and pieced work, all of which were used principally for coverlets, though occasionally for other furnishings and clothes. Hooked rugs, for which homely and primitive designs were used, were much favoured. A similar technique known as "Turkish" work was used for upholstery and cushions.

Ciba Review, Basle, No. 79, 1949.

Human factors in machine design [A]

A detailed study of human factors which must be considered in the design of machinery is being undertaken by the Industrial Engineering Research Laboratories of the University of California. The main purpose is to determine fundamental principles and to supply quantitative information which will be of use to the designer. An analysis of factors affecting the control and speed of usage of certain types of manual machine controls has already been reported.

Mechanical Engineering, New York, October 1949.

Industrial art in Denmark [A]

Werner West (Finn) points out that Danish designs are often traditional without being style copies. The quality of factory-made furniture is much higher than in Finland. Hand-made furniture, however, plays a much greater role in Denmark than in the other Scandinavian countries.

Svenska Hem, Stockholm, No. 9, 1949.

Locomotives for overseas [A]

Locomotives for export markets must combine special features required by local conditions with a sufficient degree of component standardisation for spare parts to be supplied cheaply and quickly, writes John W. Vaughan, OBE (Director, Locomotive Manufacturers' Association). The tendency is for engines to be larger and heavier, though tidier in appearance. Streamlining is becoming less popular "as careful tests demonstrate that even at highest normal running speeds its aerodynamic effects are small," and that in strong sidewinds it perceptibly retards speed. More attention is also being paid to the standard of comfort of the train crew—*e.g.*, by modifying cab shapes.

Board of Trade Journal, 8 October.

Packaging for Canadian sales [A]

A survey of packaging for the Canadian market draws attention to many points which must be specially considered because of differences in retailing methods. These points, with which British exporters need to be conversant, relate principally to the fresh approach to colour, lettering, shape, size, price-marking, related sales and re-use brought about by the development of self-service stores. Another branch of packaging dealt with in this survey is the design of shipping units.

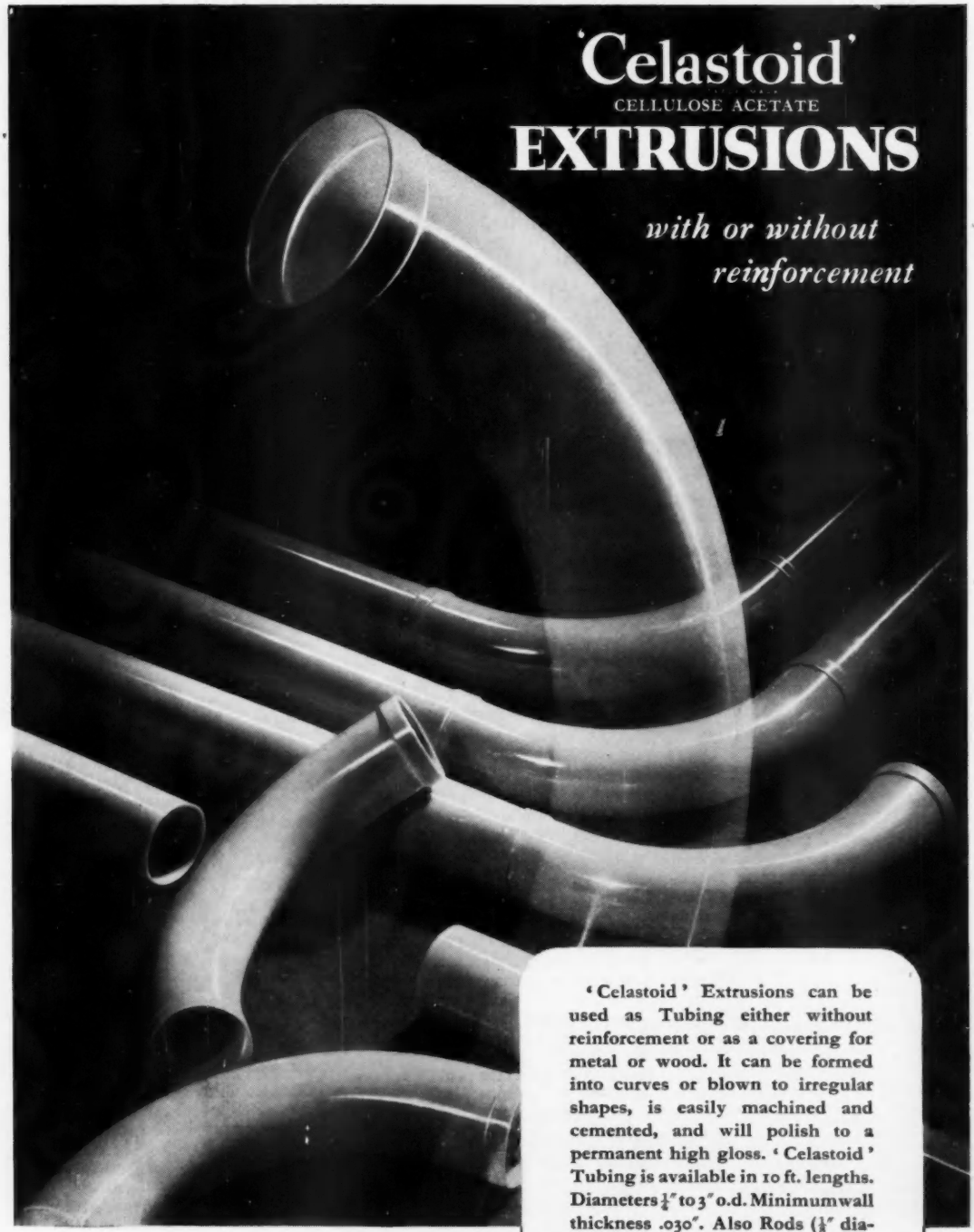
Board of Trade Journal, 15 October.

Plastics moulding [P]

Technical information for the designer and manufacturer on the moulding of plastics, with diagrams illustrating good and bad points, is reprinted from BIP trade press advertisements. Methods of overcoming typical moulding problems are described in two booklets.

Leaves from a Moulder's Notebook, I & II, British Industrial Plastics Ltd.

The letter appearing in the title of each abstract indicates the form of the publication from which that abstract is taken: [A] article or articles in a periodical; [B] book; [P] pamphlet; [S] supplement or special number. Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Streamlining: fad or function?

SIR: We in this office are sorry that Harold Van Doren's excellent article should have had to be written in defence of American product design. Surely no one but the most ignorant or misinformed ever believed that the Jello and Borax styles represented more than one facet of American industrial design.

Mr Van Doren's article (Oct, p. 2) is a simple statement of the fact that form is controlled by method. We have often heard and read our leading designers making this point, so why this continued sniping? A study of American products over the past 10 years will show a number of well-designed goods—well designed from the aesthetic as well as from the production engineer's view.

We should stop sneering at the American designer's whole-hearted and able acceptance of mechanical limitation and of the economic fact that his job is to design articles that can be produced most readily in forms that sell; the sooner we realise this the better, if we are to survive. Our superlative handmade articles are very good for prestige and advertisement, but we must bear in mind that they represent a very small part of our output, and cannot possibly provide us with a living.

Please let us have more informed articles from the "other side."

DOUGLAS SCOTT
F. C. ASHFORD
London W1 *Scott-Ashford Associates*

SIR: Mr Van Doren's explanation of the shape of a modern refrigerator is so excellently stated that I would add but little by way of comment.

The mere fact that modern domestic equipment has rounded corners, etc, is not really the major issue, since it is agreed that a certain amount of rounding of shapes is essential in this age of pressings and mouldings, and desirable also in providing easy-to-clean surfaces. The refrigerator shown is a model of good design in that it apparently satisfies the manufacturer, the designer and the housewife in terms of construction, appearance and function. It could, however, have been just as good constructionally and functionally, but of bad appearance.

In short, the feeling of contempt that exists in some quarters towards all modern domestic design is largely the result of so many examples having bad shapes bearing no relation to function or construction, lacking in subtlety and character, and so on. The same thing happens in the world of motor cars, where many essential features of modern design are being continually condemned for no other reason than bad presentation, and lack of knowledge in terms of shapes.

E. G. M. WILKES, MSIA,
Styling Engineer,
Coventry *Humber Ltd*

Stock List comment

SIR: The feature "Stock List Selection" in DESIGN, September, pp. 2-3, taught me a lot about functional design.

After some thought I could see why the curves on the stepping down of the decks towards the stern of the ship illustrated, while they made it look nicer, were bad design, because they formed a "dubiously functional feature."

It took me longer to work out why the alarm clock was perhaps as good a design as has yet been forthcoming, in attaining a satisfactory "modern" clock face. Then I saw it was because ≡, VI, ⩙ and XII were shown, that these were alarmingly stretched out, that VI and XII were up, but ≡ and ⩙ were still asleep, and that the hours were divided, not into the common-or-garden quarter-hour units that everyone would expect, but into 12-minute units, none of which adds up to 40 winks.

I was then conditioned to understand why the Riley, selected from its already re-styled Morris and Wolseley (Nuffield) stable-mates, was praised for the way in which "the shape and position of the doors gives cohesion to the whole body and also imparts due, but not undue, significance to the running board as the link between the front and back mudguards."

Silly little me—here was I thinking a clean airstream over a smooth skin on a 90 m.p.h. vehicle was good functional design, and that the Riley would be restyled as soon as they got their production lined up. Of course, good car design depends more on the lovely curves of jutting-out "mudguards" and projecting "running boards." And when I realised how the positioning of the doors (*i.e.* at each side of the car, near the seats) imparted not undue significance to the step one used to use when cars were twice as high, as the link between the back and front mudguards, I nearly fell down. I had missed it.

It was then just too easy to see how the TCP bottle with the stopper and the label were "clearly designed as integral parts of a composite whole, with an eye to complementing and enhancing one another." In a flash I saw they harmonised. And I saw how the positioning of the stopper (over the hole) imparted due, *but not undue*, significance to the sides as the link between top and bottom, for holding up the label.

I am learning fast, unless "Stock List Selection" is a "dubiously functional feature" of DESIGN.

W. A. WOOLWARD
Manager,
Edinburgh *Travel Press & Publicity Co*

Furniture design standards

MAY I comment on points raised by correspondents regarding the standard of furniture design in this country?

continued overleaf

One of the new Wolseley cars mentioned above and included in the 1951 Stock List

First, Mr Tarratt's letter (September, p. 25). I think he will find that, while I criticised the manufacturer of furniture, I also made it clear that I considered the retail buyer should take part of the blame for putting badly designed articles before the public. Mr Tarratt is quite right to regard the buyer as being in a key position. Providing he is visually educated and firm enough to refuse bad design, he could make an immense contribution towards raising the general level of design consciousness of the public.

Secondly, Mr J. W. Wright's remarks on contemporary and reproduction designs are interesting, but I do not entirely agree with his reasons (October, p. 25). It does not say much for the enterprise of manufacturers when they are only able to offer reproduction and "poor modern" designs now they have "freedom of design" (and I am bearing in mind the very real difficulty of shortage of materials). With very few exceptions—and the illustrations in your October issue of the new SCWS range are most encouraging—they seem to me content to return to the standard of pre-war days, as regards type of design.

With regard to the retailers, I have found many of them in the South of England take a very deprecating attitude towards Utility design and their remarks would certainly give prospective purchasers the idea that it was inferior. I know that the quality and finish at times left much to be desired, but the reasons for that are obvious. I still feel sure that from the design angle the Utility scheme was the best thing that happened to the trade for years, and it is sad that the trade as a whole has not, apparently, understood the lesson. What an opportunity they have to rise to the occasion and actually carry out some of the recommendations, for instance, suggested in the Working Party Report on Furniture!

While I agree with Mr Snowman (November p. 25) that the majority of prospective purchasers among the public are more concerned with "glamour" and impressing the neighbours, I contend that so long as designers feel obliged to play down to that sort of outlook we shall never get any good design.

What would have happened to London Transport's excellent standard of design had they given in to the lowest common denominator of taste? Perhaps our tube stations, posters and signs would have resembled the average cinema — meretricious vulgarity and sensationalism. Surely it is part of a designer's job to help to pass on those canons which he has learnt to those who are not visually educated.

MAURICE A. WIMBLE, LSIA
South Croydon

PAINT IN PRODUCT DESIGN

continued from p. 21

Most of the washing machines, like refrigerators, had been bought within the last four years.

While admitting that toys were likely to receive heavy handling, many women were particularly concerned about the lack of satisfactory paint finishes for these articles. Most people preferred bright colours for toys, the most popular choice being red.

The Mass Observation report may be said to confirm the opinion that most people do not know what they want until they see it. With rare exceptions—such as creative designers and the Oxford charwoman referred to above—they are unable to visualise colours or textures, or for that matter, shapes, with which they are unfamiliar.

This point was very clearly implied by one of the Mass Observation investigators, who reported: "After getting the monotonous answer *brown*, *either light or dark*, for wireless sets from nearly everybody, towards the end I got a reply 'a small white one' from two different people in one morning. This surprised me and I commented on it. I discovered that a shop round the corner from these people had a small white wireless set in the window and they both wished for it."

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NOTEBOOK

Cabin comfort for sailors

THE SUMPTUOUS passenger accommodation of luxury liners has often been publicised in books concerned with the decorative arts; but we have usually been left guessing about the crews' quarters. Times change, however, and some shipowners have now set a standard of crew accommodation that can stand up to the glare of publicity.

For a new motor cargo-liner, the *Wanstead*, the Britain Steamship Company commissioned Howard Robertson to advise on the layout and decoration of officers' and men's quarters; and they must have found some reward for this enlightened policy in the amount of space which national newspapers gave to the subject. *The Times* (5 November) published photographs of the *Wanstead's* dining-room and one of the cabins, as well as a descriptive report. "Every man sailing has his own cabin, with chest of drawers and bed-light," we read.

Another example of improved design afloat has been provided by the British Electricity Authority in the refitting of the SS *Charles Parsons*, one of the Authority's colliers. Her officers' mess and stewards' cabin have both been panelled with Warerite laminated plastic sheets, and the mess-room has a table to match: a style which has hardly been expected of "dirty British coasters" in the past.

Design and the press

With a portrait of Raymond Loewy on its front cover, *Time* (31 October) devotes over four pages of text and pictures to the "success story" of this well-known designer. Besides giving intimate details of Loewy's life, home, and personality—as no magazine but *Time* could give them—the article traces the growth of design in America over the last quarter-century. Industrial design, it is said, has mushroomed from an uncertain experiment into a major phenomenon of US business. "Little by little the hardy struggling band (US designers Loewy, Norman Bel Geddes, Walter Dorwin Teague, Henry Dreyfuss, Harold Van Doren, Lurelle Guild and others) proved that their artistry could draw that prettiest curve of all to business men—an upward sweeping sales curve."

Some of the many objects which Loewy has either invented or redesigned are described. For example, his scheme of package design for Armour & Co replaced the various multicolour labels formerly used with a standard two-colour pattern throughout, and according to *Time*, enough money was saved on the printing alone to pay for the designer's services.

Controversy about the design of materials for men's suits and shirts started a running fight among *News-Chronicle* readers, South *v* North, or London *v* The Rest.

A letter from Harrow blamed the dullness of patterns on manufacturers in the North, where, the correspondent believed, there is "a marked lack of artistic sensibility." She then suggested that "materials should be designed in London by young people who have had art school training and can interpret modern needs with culture and good taste."

The challenge was not ignored. A letter from Huyton, near Liverpool, described the Northern art schools as first class and the designers as "second to none." The South defended the North, too. A letter from Eastbourne said that a visitor to some of the Northern technical colleges would find "cultured design that will match anything of similar nature to be seen in the best art schools in London"; and a Hampshire correspondent, also disagreeing with the Harrow view, argued that the manufacturer only produced what the buyer wanted.

Exhibitions in retrospect

At Goldsmiths' Hall, London, there was an unusual opportunity of seeing Swiss, French and British products side by side. They were watches and watch components, shown by the British Horological Institute in an exhibition which lasted only three days and received less publicity than it deserved.

The watches could be divided into three classes: (*a*) horological jewellery, in which a small dial is more or less obscured by large diamonds or paste: (*b*) portable chronometers, giving so much information on so many dials that it takes a scientist to read them; (*c*) watches to tell the time by. In the first two categories, Continental firms, with their long experience, put on a better show than the British; but among watches intended for normal use there was little to choose between the three countries' products in the matter of appearance. British manufacturers produce fine cases for fine movements—chiefly Swiss; and complete watches such as the Smith's models illustrated on DESIGN'S front cover, of which one—on left—has a stainless steel case and luminous hands and figures; the other, a gold case and silvered dial.

Wrist-watch, in gold Dennison case, from the exhibition reviewed here

It was good to see that the fashion for square dials has passed its peak; even in the more fanciful designs, round dials are now popular, as, we submit, they should be while watch hands continue to follow a circular course.

Exhibiting this year in London instead of Manchester as previously, the Textile Group of the Society of Industrial Artists put on a small selective exhibition at the Rayon Industry Design Centre, in which 45 of the Group's 96 members were represented. Drawings by free-lance designers—which manufacturers could purchase—were shown, as well as designs already in production; the selection was made by a committee of the Textile Group.

The work of the RCA

The Royal College of Art is telling the public, or at least an interested part of it, about the College's organisation and interests, following the changes made since Robin Darwin became its principal; heads of the different schools within the College are giving a series of lectures at the Royal Society of Arts. The first speaker (on 1 November) was R. W. Baker, Professor of Ceramics. From his own wide experience of the industry, he suggested that the potters

continued overleaf

are less likely to raise their design standards by flirting with RA's than by bridging the gap—"as unnecessary as it is unfortunate"—between the industry and the studio potters. A few firms in the Potteries, we were told, are already preparing plans for craft studios and studio workshops, following Copenhagen and other Scandinavian examples.

That the designer in industry must be experienced in the delegation of detail work was another point made in Mr Baker's inaugural lecture. To this end, the curriculum of the RCA Ceramics School now includes the attachment of students to pottery works during their training, and the "apprenticeship" of first-year students to second- and third-year students.

Education for the consumer

A few years ago a meeting of the Museums Association was told by one speaker that isolation was the occupational disease of museums; and by another that the popular idea of museums as places in which to shelter from the rain must be destroyed.

Aware that criticisms such as these are too often valid, the curator of the Geffrye Museum, Shoreditch (Mrs M. Harrison) believes that a museum can play a part in the lives of ordinary people. She has recently arranged a series of six short talks on Sunday afternoons for young couples, on "Colour, shape and pattern in your home," with photographs, models and samples to reinforce the effect of the spoken word.

To make sure that likely people hear about these talks (by Alison Kelly), Mrs Harrison sends an informally worded circular letter to engaged and newly married couples in the district. "You are probably talking over already what furniture and equipment you will buy," she writes, "but . . . it needs care and imagination to make the most of one or two rooms and a limited income." How sensible the comment is, and how valuable such homely design-education could be on a wider scale; valuable not only to the audiences, but to the makers of well-designed products also.

For simpler shopping

A Southampton engineer-designer, Ashley Tee of Addy Products Ltd, has tried to make shopping swifter and shoppers' tempers smoother by evolving the QT barrier, illustrated below. This barrier is especially useful in self-service stores, but it can be employed in any shop where bulky articles are sold and payment is made at a cash desk. It is installed opposite the front of the desk and provides a tray for the customer's shopping-bag or parcels, immediately in front of her and at a convenient height. This tray [marked PUSH in photograph] is pivoted about a point inside the main pillar of the barrier, and when she begins to move away from the desk she automatically pushes the tray forward and to the side. As it then slides into the pillar, even the most absent-minded shopper cannot leave her purchases behind on it, as might happen otherwise—if, for example, she placed them on a fixed shelf or on the floor. Once she has passed the barrier the tray, actuated by a spring operating on a simple cam, returns to its original position.

To regulate the traffic flow of customers approaching the cash-desk, the bar seen at the top of our photograph can be fixed in any desired position. A secondary purpose of the QT barrier is to provide a prominent position for a showcase or bulletin board.

We stand corrected

A footnote in DESIGN for September (p. 13) referred to the *Journal of the Textile Industry*. Harry Ibbetson, the General Secretary of the Textile Institute, points out that the reference should have been to the *Journal of the Textile* INSTITUTE (vol. 39, pp. 444-460, 1948).

Our reference to the *Caledonia* typeface last month mentioned three sizes now in production in this country. In fact, there are four—8, 9, 10 and 11 point.

A barrier, but not a hindrance to shoppers

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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This issue concludes the first yearly volume of DESIGN. An index to the volume will be supplied with next month's issue, in which we hope also to announce arrangements for binding subscribers' copies.

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P.R.12

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